

Title: Romantic Selections I

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- IX -

Can it be right to give  
what I can give?  
To let thee sit beneath  
the fall of tears  
As salt as mine, and  
hear the sighing years  
Re-sighing on my lips  
renunciative  
Through those infrequent  
smiles which fail to live  
For all thy adjurations?  
O my fears,  
That this can scarce be  
right! We are not peers  
So to be lovers; and I  
own, and grieve,  
That givers of such gifts  
as mine are, must  
Be counted with the  
ungenerous. Out, alas!  
I will not soil thy purple  
with my dust,  
Nor breathe my poison on  
thy Venice-glass,  
Nor give thee any love--  
which were unjust.  
Beloved, I only love thee!  
let it pass.

- XIV -

If thou must love me, let  
it be for nought  
Except for love's sake  
only. Do not say  
"I love her for her smile--  
her look--her way  
Of speaking gently,--for a  
trick of thought  
That falls in well with  
mine, and certes brought  
A sense of pleasant ease  
on such a day"--  
For these things in  
themselves, Beloved, may  
Be changed, or change  
for thee,--and love, so  
wrought,  
May be unwrought so.

Neither love me for  
Thine own dear pity's  
wiping my cheeks dry,--  
A creature might forget  
to weep, who bore  
Thy comfort long, and  
lose thy love thereby!  
But love me for love's  
sake, that evermore  
Thou may'st love on,  
through love's eternity.

- XXII -

When our two souls stand  
up erect and strong,  
Face to face, silent,  
drawing nigh and nigher,  
Until the lengthening  
wings break into fire  
At either curved point,--  
what bitter wrong  
Can the earth do to us,  
that we should not long  
Be here contented?  
Think! In mounting higher,  
The angels would press  
on us and aspire  
To drop some golden orb  
of perfect song  
Into our deep, dear  
silence. Let us stay  
Rather on earth, Beloved,  
--where the unfit  
Contrarious moods of men  
recoil away  
And isolate pure spirits,  
and permit  
A place to stand and love  
in for a day,  
With darkness and the  
death-hour rounding it.

- XXIX -

I think of thee!--my  
thoughts do twine and bud  
About thee, as wild vines,  
about a tree,  
Put out broad leaves, and  
soon there's nought to  
see  
Except the straggling  
green which hides the  
wood.  
Yet, O my palm-tree, be  
it understood  
I will not have my  
thoughts instead of thee  
Who art dearer, better!  
Rather, instantly  
Renew thy presence; as a

strong tree should,  
Rustle thy boughs and set  
thy trunk all bare,  
And let these bands of  
greenery which insphere  
thee,  
Drop heavily down,--burst,  
shattered everywhere!  
Because, in this deep joy  
to see and hear thee  
And breathe within thy  
shadow a new air,  
I do not think of thee--  
I am too near thee.

- XLIII -

How do I love thee?  
Let me count the ways.  
I love thee to the depth  
and breadth and height  
My soul can reach, when  
feeling out of sight  
For the ends of Being  
and ideal Grace.  
I love thee to the level  
of everyday's  
Most quiet need, by sun  
and candlelight.  
I love thee freely, as  
men strive for Right;  
I love thee purely, as  
they turn from Praise.  
I love thee with the  
passion put to use  
In my old griefs, and with  
my childhood's faith.  
I love thee with a love I  
seemed to lose  
With my lost saints,-- I  
love thee with the breath,  
Smiles, tears, of all my  
life!--and, if God choose,  
I shall but love thee  
better after death.